REFORMATION TODAY '75

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Nottingham

30th, 31st December, 1975 and 1st January 1976

6th Carey Conference

SECOND BLESSING TEACHING IS INGRAINED INTO ALL PARTS OF EVANGELICAL teaching, thinking, preaching. It is an approach which is not biblical, is compromising and which stems from tradition. Moody's second blessing experience and full consecration ideas prevail, 'you never can prove the delights of His love until all on the altar you lay'—and speaking in tongues as a sign of the second blessing—all this is very familiar.

That there should be superlative power in the ongoing experience of justification by faith or that present union with Christ is the dynamic of sanctification seems a thing which is hazy or to be of the distant past.

Sanctification is the theme for the 6th Carey Conference scheduled for 30th, 31st December and 1st January at Nottingham.

Ferrell Griswold from Birmingham, Alabama is the guest speaker. Geoff Thomas, Peter Lewis and R. T. Kendall will deal with related subjects—modern perfectionisms (Thomas), assurance (Kendall), the Puritan Contribution (Lewis). By way of variety Robert Dunlop is to provide a biographical study of Alexander Carson. The Chairman of the Conference is Herbert Carson.

The evening meetings are open to visitors and will be held DV at Hyson Green Baptist Church, Paling Street, Hyson Green, Notts, at 8.0 p.m. Bookings to John Rubens, 36 Longden Close, Northwood End, Haynes, Beds. (Haynes 440 STD 023-066).

The Conference assembles for afternoon tea on Tuesday, 30th December, 1975 and concludes after breakfast on Friday, 2nd January, 1976. The venue for the 6th Carey Conference is the Hugh Stewart Hall, University of Nottingham and accommodation will be mainly in paired single rooms sharing bath/w.c. Those who attended the 2nd Carey at Ancaster Hall in 1971 will remember the very comfortable accommodation.

The Conference is intended for those holding office but we will be prepared to consider applications from those active in the work of the church. The numbers will be limited to about 100 residents and priority of place will be given to elders. Day visitors will be welcome but arrangements must be made in advance. The fees are as follows and are inclusive of VAT and gratuities. Full accommodation £12 for full time elders; £16 for all others. A reduction of £2 can be made for those wishing to leave late Thursday evening but this must be booked in advance.

The evening meetings is expected to conclude about 9.30.

Our man on the cover will be recognised as the friend illustrating the booklet on Genesis titled The Meaning of the World. *The notion that the patriarchs formed a sainthood of their own is unhelpful. Their concept of goodliness may not have been versatility on the squash court but we can be sure of this, that it was essentially human. Our problem is to show the relevance of Scripture to humanity today.*

4623
10.10

Editorial

'THOSE HEAVENLY POWERS WHICH HAD LAIN DORMANT IN THE CHURCH SINCE THE first ages of Christianity, awoke from their slumber in the sixteenth century, and this awakening called the modern times into existence. The church was created anew, and from that regeneration flowed great developments of literature and science, of morality, liberty, and industry. None of these things would have existed without the Reformation. Whenever society enters upon a new era, it requires the baptism of faith. In the sixteenth century God gave to man this consecration from on high by leading him back from mere outward profession and the mechanism of works to an inward and lively faith.'

So wrote Merle d'Aubigne.

We are forever grateful for the Reformation but this does not change the fact that the Reformers were men of their times. Zwingli in particular made regrettable mistakes. We must be prepared to learn not only from the glorious triumphs of the Reformation but also from the errors. The repercussions of erroneous views of the Church and admission to the Church caused not only sorrow then but continued confusion through the centuries. Early realisation of these facts by Conrad Grebel and the persecutions which followed are related by Dr. Jack Milner in the leading article of this issue.

The meaning of the World

The booklet included for subscribers with this copy of *Reformation Today* contains an exposition of the contents of Genesis and is designed specifically for non-Christian readers. It deals with the most disputed aspects of the Faith today such as the Creation, supernaturalism, the authority of Scripture, the Fall and the necessity of regeneration. Similar booklets dealing with the foremost books of Scripture are under preparation. In our outreach work we have found little tracts to be ineffective and books to be too big. Writing for the non-Christian is not easy which accounts for why so very little suitable material is available.

The series on Christian Experience

The articles on experience would not be complete without an adequate exposition on the matter of assurance and such has been written for possible inclusion in issue 29. One of our correspondents, a Pentecostal, writes to say: 'Your comments on the subjective nature of assurance remind me that this is a subject still much misunderstood. One still finds, perhaps more in Arminian circles, that many with a stronger realisation of such assurance tend to question the validity of anything less. Rod Badams says, lack of assurance is a common feature amongst Arminians, and we can see his reasoning on this contention. Yet I also find amongst them a kind of fatuous assurance which seems never to be assailed by doubt, for no better reason than that the individual does not think very deeply anyway. Such individuals appear particularly prone to judge others—I even recall one Arminian preacher who would state categorically, If you have ever had the slightest thought of doubt, you are not saved! This is making the fact of salvation depend on our assurance rather than the reverse. On the other hand, however, I was once taught in Sunday School by a man with hyper-Calvinist tendencies, who virtually discounted any sense of assurance because it would be presumptuous.'

Conrad Grebel 1498-1526

Why was Zwingli prepared to sentence one of his own converts and fellow believers to death? Dr. Jack Milner casts light on this and other important matters in this article, one of the most important biographical studies to appear in 'Reformation Today'.

NO ONE WOULD PRETEND THAT THE NAME OF CONRAD GREBEL IS KNOWN IN every household. In fact, when the material in this article was being prepared for a biographical talk at the 1974 Carey Family Conference, hardly anyone I spoke to had heard the name. Little is known of Conrad Grebel and, in any case, he only lived twenty-eight years. Nevertheless the events of his life are well worth considering, especially when we learn that this man was described as a 'satanic hypocrite' by his enemies but as 'the one who taught me and clearly believed what he taught and lived accordingly' by one of his friends. We become even more intrigued when we learn that his chief antagonist was the Swiss reformer Ulrich Zwingli and his friends were the notorious Anabaptists.

However, who *was* Conrad Grebel? He was a native of Zurich born about 1498. He was the son of Jacob Grebel, head of a very important Zurich family. Grebel's biographer says of the family, 'For one hundred years before his birth the family had played a major role among the small number of patrician families of Zurich who directed the political, military and economic affairs of that most wealthy and powerful of all the cities and cantons of the Swiss Confederacy, and in the person of Conrad's father Jacob it reached the height of its influence and prestige.' The family has survived and as recently as 1950 there was a direct descendant of Conrad, a Hans von Grebel, President of the Supreme Court of Zurich.

In 1514, when he was about sixteen years of age, Conrad went to Basel University for six months or so. Then he transferred to Vienna where he studied from 1515 to 1518. Here he became learned and cultured but also rowdy and immoral. He almost lost a hand in a brawl and ruined his health by his sinful life. Because of his rowdyism his father recalled him from Vienna in June 1518 and sent him to Paris in September 1518 to complete his education. He remained there until 1520. While in Paris he was involved in an incident in which two Frenchmen were killed. Although the extent of his involvement on this occasion was a matter of some doubt, his father and friends not unnaturally believed the worst of him. On top of this he was utterly disillusioned with Paris as a city of learning, with the result that he returned to Zurich in a bitter frame of mind. As a result of the intervention of a friend, Grebel became partially reconciled to his father but ever afterwards the father withheld the financial support which was rightfully due to his son. On top of this the father would make no plan for Conrad's future yet Conrad could do nothing

without his father's permission. Not surprisingly, tension mounted between Conrad and his family in the months following his return to Zurich. At the age of twenty-two he was an intellectually vigorous young man with nothing to do. After a short time in Basel he returned to Zurich once more and in February 1522 he married a girl considered to be beneath his station. Now poor Grebel had his mother against him as well as his father! Grebel, in a letter to a friend, complains of his mother 'raging' against his wife.

At this stage in our narrative we have the picture of a disgruntled young rake, penniless, yet settled down to the extent that he had married a girl with whom he was deeply in love. We see a young couple utterly destitute of spiritual life and in the grip of the misery caused by sin. However, by the end of 1522 the whole tone of his life had changed. Some of his letters of this period have survived and in place of the complaining, bitter spirit we now find him facing his ill-health and poverty with Christian courage. He quotes extensively from the Bible, desires his parents' conversion, requests the prayers of his friends and signs himself 'in Christ'. Grebel had clearly become an earnest Christian and it is now necessary to consider the influences which, under God, led to this change.

Effects of Zwingli's preaching

The reformer Ulrich Zwingli had come to Zurich in 1519. From 1519 to 1523 he faithfully expounded Matthew, Acts, I and II Timothy, Galatians, I and II Peter, Hebrews, Romans, Luke and almost all the remaining Pauline epistles. Grebel sat under this preaching and through it he was converted. Grebel became an ardent disciple of Zwingli and a whole-hearted supporter of his plan for reform—which was that only such doctrines and ordinances should be maintained in the church as were according to Holy Scripture. All others which failed to measure up to this scriptural standard should be abandoned. The feeling between Grebel and Zwingli was mutual. Zwingli regarded Grebel as 'a most excellent and learned young man'. On his side Grebel described Zwingli as 'a man of the highest integrity'. Yet Grebel and Zwingli became bitter opponents. It was Zwingli who called Grebel a 'satanic hypocrite'. Also we find Grebel calling Zwingli a 'liar'. The change in attitude which ultimately led to these severe accusations began in October 1523. What was the cause of it?

Zwingli's ministry had been an honest attempt to arrive at the pure gospel. When he came to Zurich in 1519 he had been one of a very small minority in a papist city subject to the bishopric of Constance. Many had received his preaching gladly, so much so that in a disputation with the papists in January 1523 the priests were ordered by the city council to preach nothing contrary to God's word. In October 1523 a second disputation was held to deal with the mass and images. Nothing was decided with respect to the mass, but the city and canton affirmed

their independence of the Bishop of Constance and one of the members of the city council closed the disputation by urging on the work of reformation. All sounded most promising yet an incident occurred which occasioned the tension between the two men leading, ultimately, to an open breach. This incident revealed to Grebel and others a change in attitude, on Zwingli's part, to the work of reformation.

Up to this point Zwingli had been quite radical in his preaching. He openly condemned the worship of images and declared the mass to be a work of the devil. Zwingli saw the church as a minority in a hostile world and was prepared for suffering. He declared that obedience to the Lord did not require the permission of men. The following extracts illustrate this early attitude. Writing to a friend in 1520 he said 'I desire to tell you openly that I believe that just as the church was born in blood, so it can only be renewed by blood, not otherwise. . . . Never will the world accept Christ, and even the promise of rewards by Christ is accompanied by the promise of persecution. He sent out his own like sheep among wolves.' As late as the January 1523 disputation he replies as follows to a request from an opponent that the city lords of Zurich should act as judges in the matter being debated. 'In worldly things and actions I know well that on no account of resistance judges are necessary, and I would very gladly accept my lords of Zurich as judges. But in matters concerning divine wisdom and truth I would accept no one as witness and judge except the living Scriptures and the Spirit of God who speaks out of the Scriptures.' Just before the October disputation he said 'The authorities dare not order anything else than that which the holy and unchangeable Scripture of God teaches. If they fail to do so, and adopt some other course, which I do not expect, I would none the less severely preach against them with the word of God.' Nothing was decided about the mass, remember, and when it became apparent that this was to be so, Grebel and others began to urge that it was no good preaching that the mass was of the devil and yet do nothing about it. Actions were needed and not mere words. To this Zwingli replied, 'My lords will decide whatever regulations are to be adopted in the future in regard to the mass.' Simon Stumpf, one of those who desired deeds, not words, replied, 'Master Ulrich, you do not have the right to place the decision on this matter in the hands of my lords, for the decision has already been made, the Spirit of God decides. . . . If my lords adopt and decide on some other course that would be against the decision of God, I will ask Christ for his Spirit and I will preach and act against it.' (He was expelled from the city soon after.) Here precisely was the incident which led to the parting of the ways.

Grebel leads the radical reformation

Grebel and others desired reform by an immediate obedience to the word of God whatever might be the reaction of the city council and the populace

as a whole. This had also been Zwingli's original attitude but, seeing the popular response to the gospel in Zurich, he now began to think in terms of reforming the whole city and canton. As a result he was now willing to wait for reformation through the authority of the magistrates.

In the months following the October disputation, Grebel and others independently (as yet there was no separatist group in Zurich) set before Zwingli their plans for reform but met with total lack of success. Their plan was, basically, to form a believers' Church and to abolish tithes and usury—the methods of raising support for the ministry and upkeep of buildings. Instead the ministers were to be supported by voluntary contributions. Zwingli was challenged to relinquish his stipend as a matter of principle and promised the equivalent so that he would not suffer in any way. A further suggestion was that among believers all things should be in common. This last has often been twisted to mean that the Anabaptists were opposed to men having possessions. All it meant in Grebel's case was that no man should so cling to his property that he would allow his brother to be in want. Also the desire for a believers' Church has been misrepresented as some kind of perfectionism. Grebel is quoted as saying that he wanted a church in which there was no sin. All he was seeking was a church separate from the state. Unfortunately the master, Zwingli, was unwilling to follow the implications of his own teachings as his pupils had done and drew back. Those who had been disappointed with Zwingli began to form themselves into a group in which they studied the Bible and observed the Lord's Supper simply, according to Zwingli's teaching. Grebel gradually emerged as the leader of this group. They had been forced into the position of being separatists from the State Church system. Incidentally, from the time of his adherence to the principle of reformation through the magistrate, it appears that Zwingli's preaching became less spiritual and more political.

The natural consequence of their separatism and rejection of the mass was for them to turn their attention to the other ordinance, mutilated in the pre-reformation 'church' to infant baptism. The consideration of this is most instructive. Infant baptism had become quite an issue throughout the reformed cantons of Switzerland and in southern Germany. The emphasis on faith in reformation preaching and Zwingli's teaching on the Lord's Supper as a simple memorial feast could not do otherwise than undermine the practice of infant baptism. Zwingli at one stage actually said from the pulpit that infants should not be baptised. The reformer Oecolampadius at Basel was considering the abandonment of infant baptism and in Strassburg the authorities had made infant baptism optional. In 1524 then, there was widespread uncertainty about infant baptism and a general willingness to abandon it. The Brethren (for so they styled themselves) in Zurich are not therefore to be blamed as the originators of opposition to infant baptism. Later, at their trial, Grebel

and his friend Felix Manz insisted that they had been convinced on the matter of baptism by Zwingli himself. The subject was widely debated from the spring of 1524 and all eyes were turned to Zwingli and Zurich for a lead. As the discussions proceeded between Zwingli and the 'radicals' Zwingli dug in his heels and began to look for justification of the current practice. He began to liken baptism to circumcision and saw baptism as a kind of cement which held society together. He began to view the city of Zurich as a kind of Swiss Jerusalem, the canton as a Judah in a reformed confederation or Swiss Israel. He began to view the demands of the radicals as politically dangerous. Indeed by the end of 1524 the discussions with the radicals had ceased to be purely religious in his eyes. He began to charge Grebel and his friends with sedition—a political crime. This short account should at least cast doubt on the usual claim that the covenant argument for infant baptism and associated issues arose out of a calm, dispassionate, deep study of the Bible and that baptists are unlearned in the Scriptures.

A gathered church formed

The final disputation on baptism occurred in January 1525. Infant baptism was retained and all parents were ordered to have their children baptised early, with stiff penalties for disobedience. The meetings of the Brethren were forbidden and Grebel and Manz were instructed to cease from their 'disputing and agitating'. Non-citizens were ordered to leave the canton forthwith. After these decrees of the council, some of the Brethren met together on the night of January 21st, 1525 in the home of Felix Manz. This was an historic occasion in which the final step was taken on the road to full-grown Anabaptism. Here is an eye-witness account of the final repudiation of infant-baptism and, with it, the state-church set-up in Zurich. 'And it came to pass as they were together anxiety came upon them, yea, pressed upon their hearts. Thereupon they began to bend their knees before Almighty God in heaven and to call upon him as the one who knows the heart; and they prayed that he would grant them to do his divine will, and that he would reveal his mercy to them. Flesh and blood or human wisdom had not brought them to this point, because they well knew what they would have to suffer on account of it. After the prayer George Blaurock arose and entreated Conrad Grebel for God's sake to baptise him with the right Christian baptism upon the confession of his faith. And as he kneeled down with this request and desire, Conrad baptised him, since at that time there was no ordained minister to perform such work. After this had taken place, the others desired of George that he should baptise them, which also he did upon their request. And so they together dedicated themselves in the high fear of God to the name of the Lord, confirmed one another in the service of the gospel, and began to teach and to hold the faith. Therewith was the separation from the world and its evil works begun.'

Having made the break, they no longer felt any necessity of working with the Zwinglian movement or of trying to persuade the leaders. They henceforth acted as if there were no other Christians in the world and that, whatever others did, they had to answer to God for their own conduct and not to men.

In the following week an Anabaptist congregation was formed in Zollikon, a village five miles from Zurich. Thirty-five people were baptised (by pouring water, it seems) and the church met together to observe the Lord's Supper with great solemnity and the utmost simplicity. These things were happening in Zollikon whereas in the reformed parishes of Zurich the baptism of infants according to the new liturgy of Leo Jud (Zwingli's friend and partner) included blowing on the infant, exorcism, crossing and the using of spittle and oil. Also mass was still being said in Latin by a vested pastor and the people received the wafer but no wine. Grebel and his friends were preachers of repentance and their hearers experienced great conviction of sin and of the need for forgiveness. Receiving baptism as a sign of renunciation of the world resulted in great joy in the appropriating of forgiveness through Christ. The Zurich Anabaptists are frequently represented as hotheads by their enemies. The records reveal them to be sober, earnest Christians. Their theology was identical to that of Zwingli—they had been taught by him—they differed only in the matters already described. There were some excesses among them later when they had been deprived of the sober influence of their leaders because of persecution but then, the record of the reformed churches is not exactly flawless!

Grebel had only twenty months or so to live before dying of the plague in August 1526. It now remains to give an outline of these months before drawing some lessons from the conflict between Grebel and Zwingli.

Preaching and persecution among Anabaptists

In February and March Grebel went to Schaffhausen preaching. He briefly returned to Zurich then travelled to St. Gall where his brother-in-law, Vadian, was burgomaster and town physician. He was there two weeks and hundreds of people flocked to hear him preach. On Palm Sunday, April 9th, great crowds followed him to the river to be baptised. As yet the authorities here had not interfered and people responded eagerly to the preaching of repentance. Grebel left after two weeks and the work was continued by a friend, Eberli Bolt. The Lord so blessed the work that the local Zwinglian movement was almost deserted. The authorities became alarmed and at last intervened and suppressed the movement.

Meanwhile Grebel was back in Zurich, in hiding. From April to June his activities were carried out in secret. He was unable to visit the friends in Zollikon, just outside the city, for guards were set to catch him. These

were months of ill health and poverty. He had to sell his library to raise funds. His wife was most unhappy about his activities and did not seem to share his views. She seems to have been left behind spiritually and it would be interesting to know if Grebel, in the tumult of the past months, had neglected teaching her or if she had ever really been a true believer.

In July he went to Grunningen, east of Zurich and part of the same canton, and remained there until his arrest in October. During these months he was joined by Felix Manz and George Blaurock and at this time the Zurich Anabaptist movement enjoyed its greatest success. Here they proved the popular nature of their doctrine, for the common people heard them gladly. Because of the rather lordly and unsympathetic attitude of the city council of Zurich over a number of years, the peasantry of Grunningen were not too well-disposed towards the Zurich authorities. It is well to bear this in mind when reading reports and accusations of the revolutionary nature of the Brethren's teaching. Here, if anywhere, a popular uprising could easily have been encouraged yet all the evidence points to the purely religious and non-political nature of Grebel's teaching. On one day in Hinwil, a village nearby, Grebel, Manz and Blaurock had been forbidden to preach in the village church and so they withdrew to a nearby meadow to preach to a large crowd. The authorities interrupted the meeting and arrested the leaders. If the crowd had been stirred up by revolutionary ideas why is it that there was no disturbance and why did the leaders submit so quietly? The answer is, of course, that these men not only based their practice on the New Testament but also imbibed its very spirit. After their arrest, the authorities really set about stamping out the movement. Hereafter the record is one of martyrdom and persecution. Only the strongest could endure it.

The arrest occurred in October 1525 and the leaders were tried in November. One of the chief witnesses for the prosecution was Zwingli himself. The trial was a pathetic travesty of justice. The 'evidence' was based on hearsay. After prefacing his comments by such words as 'it is said' Zwingli summed up by saying that 'from all this he could infer nothing else but they had as a final goal so to increase their number that they would be able to free themselves from the control of the authorities'. No mention of disturbing the church—to Zwingli a theological radical was all the same as a political revolutionary! Grebel's biographer comments, 'Zwingli's purpose in making the charge of sedition and revolution is perfectly clear; he wanted to curse the Anabaptists with charges which they could not escape; he was turning the trial from one of doctrinal and ecclesiastical questions into one of social revolution. Zwingli's grievous inconsistency in this is clear from the fact that later he himself stated more than once that the conflict between himself and the Brethren concerned only non-essential and external things. For his charge of revolution, Zwingli could produce as evidence only two rumours which had come from a third and fourth hand.'

The leaders, 'because of their Anabaptism and unbecoming conduct', were sentenced 'to lie in the tower on a diet of bread and water, and no one was to be permitted to visit them except the guards. There they were to lie as long as God should please and as seems good to my lords.' While in prison, Grebel strengthened the brethren (increasing in number as they were caught) by reading and admonition. The following March they were retried and sentenced to life imprisonment. At the same time an edict was issued against the Anabaptists. Death by drowning was set as punishment for all who, henceforth, should perform 'rebaptism'. The drowning was, of course, a cruel mockery of baptism and had the full support of Zwingli.

The life imprisonment lasted only two weeks because the prisoners escaped from an unlocked window. When the fleeing prisoners discussed whither they might go, some humorously suggested, 'Let us go to the Red Indians across the sea'. Little is known of Grebel's movements from then until his death in August, but the plague most likely saved him from a martyr's death, for Manz was recaptured in December 1526 and executed by drowning in the river Limmat. He was the first Anabaptist martyr in Zurich.

This, then, is an outline of the part thrilling, part tragic life of Conrad Grebel. Because of all the false information about, and prejudice towards, the Anabaptists it is best, at this point, to state Grebel's views once more by summary and then seek to draw some lessons.

Lessons and conclusions

1. Grebel's theology was no different from that of Zwingli except that he had followed his initial radicalism to its conclusion in response to obedient Bible study. Whatever may have been the vagaries of others of the Continental Anabaptists, the Swiss Brethren were initially, at least, 'Reformed' in theology and, in many ways, similar to the early 17th Century English Calvinistic Baptists—especially in the step-by-step progress from the Reformed state church to separatism, to antipaedobaptism and finally to Anabaptism.

2. Grebel believed in a 'gathered church'. The baptised community was the church and the rest was the world. In this he was truly biblical.

3. Grebel was not interested in politics as such and was not a revolutionary. He tended to be what we would today call a pacifist as far as war was concerned. This is hardly surprising since so many sixteenth century wars had religious overtones to them.

4. He was always regarded as sober and not subject to visions and fanaticism. The disorders in St. Gall, described by Merle D'Aubigné as examples of normal Anabaptism, were restricted to the lunatic fringe.

An *opponent* described the St. Gall Anabaptists as having a 'conversation and bearing shining forth as entirely pious, holy and unpunishable'.

The emphasis in his preaching was entirely biblical, 'that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works'. The Zurich Anabaptists were sober, zealous, godly people and Grebel was their leader.

What lessons can we learn from Grebel's life and his conflict with Zwingli?

1. In reading Reformed theology it is most necessary to remember that the Reformers were largely in error on church matters, not only with regard to infant baptism but in the whole area of the church and the world. Especially the teaching of the Reformers on the 'magistrate' is to be regarded very warily. Many these days, who are beginning to love the doctrines of grace, also find themselves longing for a return of 'the good old days' of Christian countries and cities like Geneva and Zurich. Rather we ought to thank God they have gone. Would you enjoy the prospect of being commanded by law to go to church and of being forced to have your children sprinkled? When we claim to be 'Reformed' let us make sure we know exactly what we are saying.

2. Secondly, I think it is safe to say that Zwingli's life was a tragedy. He fulfilled in himself the Lord's words, 'all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword'. Zwingli relied on the power of men. Protestant Zurich tried to 'encourage' the Catholic cantons to turn Protestant by a blockade—the trade routes went through Zurich. The Catholics responded by defeating Zurich in battle and *Zwingli died on the battlefield.* Grebel understood the words 'the weapons of our warfare are not carnal' —Zwingli did not. The attitude of reliance on the flesh is far-reaching, even today. Let us learn from Zwingli and seek to root it out of our own hearts.

3. Finally, I think it is most encouraging to have information about people like Grebel coming to light, however brief it might be. We have been learning about a time of great ingathering in Switzerland which was previously unknown to us and largely discounted by historians of the Reformation. This leads me to suggest that there are hosts of glorious episodes in church history known only to God and ready to be revealed and rejoiced over at the Last Day.

Books used in preparing this article:
Conrad Grebel, 1498-1526 by Harold S. Bender, *The Radical Reformation* by G. H. Williams, *The Reformers and Their Stepchildren* by Leonard Verduin, and *History of the Reformation* by J. H. Merle d'Aubigné.

Wolves in Sheep's Clothing

Correspondence

Christianity Today, a popular American journal is not noted for definitive reformed teaching but is more like a ship without a rudder. Where the popular tide goes there she goes. The books of Professor William Barclay receive unqualified commendation in the advertisement columns of *Christianity Today*. William Barclay's autobiography, *Testament of Faith* (Mowbrays 1975, £2.75) reveals what he really believes, namely, that nobody will ever be lost (p. 58) and that God is in his infancy and needs the help of man (p. 114). His rejection of the deity of Christ is quite clear (p. 49ff.) Ian Randall has written to Professor Barclay.

Dear Professor Barclay,

I have recently read your book, *Testament of Faith* and felt I wanted to write to you. I find we were born in the same town—Wick, Caithness. Our family lived in Caithness for a number of years.

Though I found your Testament fascinating, I must confess I was deeply disturbed by the section where you deny that Jesus was God (page 49, 50). I have been much helped by C. S. Lewis who was, as you know, converted from Atheism to belief that Jesus is God. He takes the view that so many claims of Christ are either sheer arrogance or are insane if he is not God. You quote 'He who has seen me has seen the Father' and imply that the Father is not God. I have argued with Jehovah's Witnesses on such texts as Hebrews 1:8, 'Thy throne O God is for ever and ever,' referring to Jesus. But I have always backed up the Scripture by saying that all true Christians believe in the Godhead of Christ, and they (Jehovah's Witnesses) are not in that number.

I am also unhappy with your defence of universalism (page 58-61). You mention some texts which speak about 'all' but ignore the many texts which teach eternal punishment. The idea of opportunity to repent after death may be an interesting speculation, but where does it have biblical support?

I gather you are reputed to be sensitive about criticism from evangelicals, having been brought up in that faith and rejected it. Probably the criticisms have at times been in the wrong spirit. But we must not forget the attitude of Jesus and of Paul to those who they saw as distorting the gospel (e.g. Galatians chapter one). If Paul could make such an issue about justification by faith, was it not because eternal life or death depends upon that truth? And for the same reason should not Christians today contend as steadfastly for the deity of Christ, his physical resurrection, the nature of the atonement, the method of salvation and the final destiny of the unrepentant —all central doctrines upon which you cast doubt.

Yours sincerely,
Ian M. Randall,
(*Assistant Editor*
'Reformation Today').

One of the most appalling statements denying the deity of Christ yet to appear in our newspapers was printed in *The Times* October 11th, 1975. A letter was sent to *The Times* as follows:

The Editor,
'The Times,'
New Printing House Square,
London WC1X 8EZ.

Dear Sir,

Professor John Hick, Professor of Theology at the University of Birming-

ham, in his article *Changing views of the uniqueness of Christ* (October 11th, 1975) comes to an extraordinary conclusion. Claiming to represent 'most New Testament scholars today' in doubting whether the historical Jesus uttered speeches attributed to him in St. John's Gospel, he goes on to conclude that Jesus was not God after all but a man who was entirely conscious of God, and that the language to which we have become accustomed, such as Jesus the Son of God, God the Son and God incarnate, is mythological language. Jesus, he reasons, is not unique and the idea that salvation can only be by him must be rejected.

Having discarded historical Christianity our Professor must find some role for Jesus and suggests that he has made a splendid contribution in enriching the Hinduism of Mahatma Gandhi. If this illustrious achievement were not enough we are presented with the breathtaking possibility of Jesus contributing to a 'larger world ecuminism', a fabulous unity no doubt of Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Sikkism and Buddism! Having been treated to the Professor's conclusions I would now like to make some of my own.

In the first place it means little to quote in the name of most New Testament scholars today since they are unbelievers and non-Christians anyway. The quest to disprove the Bible in the name of scholarship is nothing new. Since all faiths are more or less the same the Professor might as well be a Buddhist, which is to be an idolator or a Muslim which is to be a Christ-rejector.

To this it might be objected that Mr. Hick has attained theological knowledge. It can be replied that so have the devils, who believe far more truth than the professor, but not to salvation. What non-Christian scholars labouring to disprove Christianity fail to see is that the Divinity of Christ rests on the united testimony of the Scriptures as a whole and not just on this or that part. Isaiah testified to Christ as the mighty God and the Father of eternity (Isa. 9:6). All the apostles give united voice to the Deity of Christ and on that foundation they built the Church (see Matt. 16:16-18)—and we continue to build on that foundation today. I believe John to be the author of his Gospel, his epistles and the Revelation because of the integral unity of his writings with the rest of Scripture and reject the argument of the so-called scholars as frivolous.

Like the Pharisees before them the unbelieving scholars strain at a gnat and swallow a camel. They reject the authentic authorship of books on conjectures as flimsy as tinsel paper and on that basis reject the whole testimony of the Bible, the Church and of the Holy Spirit throughout the age.

Our Lord described false prophets who denied that he was the only door of the sheepfold as thieves and robbers. There is only one door of salvation, only one way to God and that is by the atonement of Jesus Christ (John 10: 8-11). Peter confirmed this when he declared, 'Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name given among men, whereby we must be saved' (Acts 4:12), and Paul the same when he asserted that there is only one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (1 Tim. 2:5).

To come back to John, he said that the acid test for any teacher of Christianity is the very question of Christ's divinity (1 John 4:1-3). Since Professor Hick so clearly rejects Christ's divinity he is according to John anti-Christ, the same as a Jehovah's Witness who also contends against Christ's deity. Our Lord in speaking of the narrow way and the strait gate (which sounds very different from the broad way, all creeds being mixed together) warned about wolves in sheep's clothing. It is a terrible thing to don a gown in the name of Christianity, be paid for that, and then labour to destroy the very foundation of the Gospel.

Rejection of the Gospel in the name of respectable scholarship will receive the same judgment as our Lord pronounced upon the respectable Pharisees when he said of them, 'ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go

in—how can ye escape the damnation of hell' (Matt. 23).
I have sent a copy of this letter to John Hick.

Yours sincerely,

Turning from the wolves to other matters one of our correspondents writes concerning the Scripture Union:

'Several of the directors of this Company have expressed grave concern at the decline in the doctrinal emphasis of the Notes published by Scripture Union. I have memories of the notes written by Graham Scroggie and George Goodman, and my own reaction is that there has been a serious decline in the 'content' and emphasis.
Is there any possibility of bringing influence to bear upon Scripture Union so that they make a serious examination of the decline and take steps to get back to a sound biblical emphasis? There is no doubt that SU has built up a large readership over the years and it is alarming that there is this tendency which will undoubtedly have a serious effect upon undiscriminating readers, especially the rising generation.
If this decline cannot be arrested, then is there any possibility of *Evangelical Press* promoting Notes on the Scriptures, either in a book of notes such as the three-year Bible Study Course under the title, *Search the Scriptures*, or by monthly or quarterly Notes written by acceptable and sound persons. There is undoubtedly a need for something like this, and unless SU can be recalled to its former emphasis, or a better emphasis, then it seems that the time has arrived for something on sound biblical and reformed lines, with application of the truth and proper exegesis in arresting Notes.'
With more support than hitherto the *Evangelical Press* has taken on a new lease of life. The directors of EP are Herbert Carson, Willis Metcalfe, Bill Clark, Edgar Andrewes, John Legg and Erroll Hulse. Bill Clark acts as managing director. No doubt attention will be given to the suggestions made above.

In the editorial of the last issue of *Reformation Today* dangers involved in the establishment of groups, associations or denominations were mentioned. Attempts to avoid such dangers are reflected in the following letter from Keith Mawdsley of the Association of Evangelical Baptist Churches.

'You are right in saying that there is no written law which restricts the member churches of the Association of Evangelical Baptist Churches from associating "with others outside the group"; you are wrong in suggesting that our members do not associate with others for "fear of suspicion of disloyalty". In fact, our desire for fellowship is strong. The sole reason for the Association is to encourage fellowship between churches and brethren who are concerned to stand upon the fundamental doctrines of Scripture, which are frequently challenged and disbelieved in the inclusivist Baptist fold. The Association's appeal is primarily to ex-BU churches who are now thoroughly independent but who wish to be identified as Evangelical Baptists. There is no sacrifice of independency, but there is a Biblical emphasis on association with like-minded people. Our churches belong to other fellowship groupings outside AEBC. There are some who are identified with the Reformed Baptist position and who attend the Carey Conference; there are others who gravitate towards charismatic groups. All our member churches are free to associate with wider groupings. The Association of Evangelical Baptist Churches has recently been accepted into the membership of the British Evangelical Council and we rejoice in that wider fellowship. Indeed our constitutionally inbuilt lifespan of ten years (subject to review) demonstrates our concern to eventually be dissolved (as the Lord makes possible) into a more comprehensive evangelical fellowship. In spite of an elected committee, we are not so heavily structured that such a transaction will be difficult.'

The Christian in Suffering

by David Kingdon

THE CHRISTIAN MUST EXPECT SUFFERING AND PREPARE FOR IT IF HE IS TO glorify God in his suffering. It is from this perspective alone that we can consider this tremendous subject, for unless we see why we should expect suffering and are taught *how* to prepare for suffering we shall not be likely to glorify God in it.

Why The Christian Must Expect Suffering

The Christian, according to the teaching of Scripture, must expect suffering for several reasons.

He lives in a world which groans in travail

The world in which the Christian lives is not the world God originally made; beautiful, harmonious, without strife and corruption. It is a world which now lives under God's curse—a world in which there is disaster, disease and death. It is in *bondage to decay* (Rom. 8:21), *subjected to frustration* (v. 20), a world in which labour is hard and man's life-span shortened so that death comes often.

Therefore, as a *man* the Christian may expect suffering. There is no automatic immunity for him simply because he is a Christian (and thank God that this is so for automatic immunity from suffering consequent upon one making a Christian profession would multiply the numbers of false professors untold times).

The Christian as a man, then, lives in a fallen world, not in the 'new heavens and the new earth'. True, the Holy Spirit indwells our mortal bodies, but we do not yet have the bodies of our resurrection. So we must expect suffering—the suffering of pain and of death, the last enemy.

The Christian is identified with Christ

As a wife is so identified with her husband in marriage-union that she takes his name, so a Christian is so identified with Christ by faith-union with him that he takes his name.

Paul, the apostle, assumes (Rom. 8:17) that suffering is a mark of our sonship by virtue of our identification with Christ. He does not say that we suffer *for* him—that would be a man-centred and meritorious view of the Christian's suffering. He says that we suffer *with* him, just as we are joint-heirs *with* him, and shall one day be glorified together *with* him. The expression 'if so be' does not indicate doubt, i.e. 'if perhaps' but certainty 'if surely, without a doubt', you suffer with Christ. Paul assumes suffering as a matter of course for the Christian. For him Christ, the Christian and suffering go together in an unmistakable fashion. Why is this so?

Firstly, because the Christian's way to glory parallels Christ's way to glory. How did our Lord enter into glory? How did he travel from Bethlehem to his Father's throne? Along the path of suffering—of abuse, scorn, rejection and crucifixion. He consistently taught his disciples that he must go this way (e.g. Matt. 16:21), but they as consistently refused to believe him—they wanted an eschatological Messiah of glory! Even after his resurrection he had to teach them that the Messiah must needs suffer and enter into glory (Luke 24:25-26). Today the servant is not greater than his master (John 15:20). He went to glory this way, and if we are his brothers, as we are by grace, so must we. His way is our way. 'It is the way the Master went, should not the servant tread it still?'

Secondly, the Christian's way to glory is by identification with Christ in his sufferings. Paul in Romans chapter 8 verse 17 is saying more than that we imitate Christ in his sufferings. He is saying that the child of God suffers *with* Christ. This is the language of identification rather than of imitation. We suffer with him because now we are identified with him and he with us. How? Through our union with him by faith. So real is this union that what he suffers we suffer, and what we suffer he suffers. These are *not* his redemptive sufferings. In these we could have no part whatsoever. Only he, the sinless one, could suffer for our sins. And these sufferings are finished, for his work of redemption has been accomplished—it is finished (John 19:30).

Christ still suffers, for the world still rejects him as he is represented by believers. And he still suffers because he is in living union with all the suffering members of his body. So Paul could write (Col. 1:24) of 'the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church'. His own apostolic sufferings were the afflictions of Christ! 'Each sorrow of each Christian heart is one drop more added to the contents of the measure which has to be filled to the brim, ere the purposes of the Father who leads through suffering to rest are accomplished.' (A. Maclaren.) If Christ suffers with his people, it is also true that his people suffer with him. They share in his continuing rejection. They feel something of the world's hatred of him. Their lives, in so far as they manifest Christ, expose the world's sin, and attract the world's wrath. You cannot be *in* Christ, Paul would tell us, without knowing something of the world's opposition to Christ. So suffering is inevitable. If we are in Christ we shall certainly suffer *with* Christ.

Suffering is God's means of chastising the Christian

God chastises the children in his family, and his chastisements are the proof of his love for them (Heb. 12:6). He knows that chastisement is painful, but it is never without a purpose, for 'afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby'. Suffering is God's principal means of chastising his children. He afflicts us

because he abhors our sins and desires to make us like himself. He is, as Herbert Carson has pointed out, 'more concerned with our character, than with our comfort' (*Suffering*, p. 4). We, alas, fix our eyes upon comfort, so the sharpness of God's rod of suffering has to be used to develop our characters. Suffering subdues our rebellious spirits, humbles our natural pride and exposes our pretensions in insisting on our own way. While all suffering is not necessarily for the purpose of chastisement, yet much suffering certainly is. Since God scourges *every* son whom he receives (Heb. 12:6), it must follow that we shall all suffer God's correction from time to time. He does not exempt some from the rod. All come under his Fatherly discipline. So each Christian must expect to experience God's chastisement through suffering, which of course can take various forms.

Through suffering the Christian is refined

Suffering in the trials which God sends upon us in his providence is God's refining fire which destroys dross, and causes the gold of grace to appear more fully in our lives. The Christian's faith is tried (1 Pet. 1:7) so that he may look more constantly upon things not seen. The Christian is also tried so that he may learn 'endurance' (Jas. 1:3), that quality of steadfastness which shines forth through the fires of trial. To refine gold great heat is needed for only then is the dross separated from the gold. Only in the hot furnace of affliction do we as Christians let go of the dross to which, in our foolishness, we ardently cling.

Again, suffering is to be expected, for without it there would be no refinement of character, no destruction of life's dross. Only he who needs no refining can expect not to meet suffering, but who of us would dare to claim that he does not need the refining fire of suffering? Job doubtless was refined by his suffering, for did not he abhor himself in dust and ashes? Peter was mellowed by suffering when he learned that he was capable of denying Christ. How we ought to bless God for the refining fire of suffering.

By suffering the Christian is prepared for glory

Suffering is to be expected now, at the present time. But suffering prepares us for glory. Indeed Paul says, it actually 'achieves for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all' (2 Cor. 4:17, NIV).

Suffering prepares us for glory in two ways. It weans us away from attachment to this world. It snaps the threads which bind us to this earthly scene. It teaches us that here we 'have no continuing city' (Heb. 13:14). We need this reminder—and need it often because we often do not live as though heaven's glory were shining on our faces. As Herbert Carson says very powerfully: 'Our homes, our careers, our hobbies, our gardens, our friends, our possessions—all these are potent factors to root us firmly in the soil of this world. But the heavenly

gardener is going to transplant us all to another and fresher soil. The full flowering of our lives will not be seen in this weed-infested ground but in the paradise of God. So God prepares us for the day of our transplanting. Like a careful gardener loosening the soil around the roots, he prises us free from the things which would cling to us, and to which we would cling. It is suffering that is so often his trowel, it is sorrow which at times is his fork, as he reminds us that attractive though earth may be, heaven is our true home' (ibid p. 6).

Suffering also increases our capacity to enjoy glory. As we set 'the sufferings of this present time' in comparison with the glory which is to be revealed in us (Rom. 8:18), our desire for glory grows. We long to depart to be with Christ which is far better. We groan for the day of complete redemption when we shall receive resurrection bodies. We yearn for the new heavens and the new earth where there is no more death, and sin has no place whatsoever. But it is suffering which enlarges our spiritual capacity. It is sorrow which deepens our desire. It is trial which causes us to look beyond this vale of tears to that time when 'God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away' (Rev. 21:4).

(To be concluded)

With this issue we celebrate the completion of six years' publication of this magazine. To celebrate the occasion handsome and sturdy binders in red cloth have been made. The words *Reformation Today* are printed in gold letters in the spine. Each binder can take twelve issues. The cost is £1·35 each, plus 30p for packing and postage. At a 15% inflation rate such a binder would have cost 67p in 1970, and calculated at the same rate will be worth £2·51 in 1980!

Bound copies of the first twelve issues are now sold out. Bound copies in red cloth of issues 13-24 are available at £2·75 each plus 50p for postage and packing.

KEEPING THE GOSPEL PURE *(Continued from page 22)*

error will have to be opposed; heretics will have to be denounced. All of that does not make for high marks in the popularity polls! But Paul's great concern was to be a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ and to please God. We cannot improve upon the apostle's outlook here. God forbid that we should be ugly and contentious; may he grant to us the ability to speak the truth in love! But may he grant us courage like Paul's, to stand uncompromisingly against perversion of the gospel of grace, that our hearts might burn with concern for the gospel, and for the souls of men, and that we might be motivated by a desire to please God and serve Christ which will make us independent of the opinions of men.

One of the most significant publishing events of recent years is the reprinting (by Maranatha) of the complete works (22 volumes) of Thomas Manton, in the U.S.A. For expository and practical usefulness Manton is equal to Owen, Goodwin, Sibbes, Flavel, Charnock or Brooks. The extensiveness of his material and the quality of his thought make his works most valuable. I would prefer a set of Manton to any of those just mentioned. A handsome portrait of Thomas Manton adorns the front cover of Peter Lewis's book, The Genius of Puritanism (*see page* 33). *Seventeen cameos of Puritan lives form part of that volume. The following paragraphs are taken from the one on Manton.* (Editor)

Thomas Manton (1620-1677)

Manton seems to have united the advantage of nature, circumstances and grace from his youth. Child of the manse and youthful graduate of Wadham College, Oxford, he was ordained at twenty by the famous Joseph Hall, Bishop of Exeter (later of Norwich). Three years' ministry in Devon succeeded this prestigious beginning and at the end of that period the patronage of Colonel Popham obtained for him a living at Stoke Newington. It was from here that he began to attract the notice of the London clergy and even Parliament. Seven years later, Manton succeeded the aged Puritan rector of Covent Garden, Obadiah Sedgewick (he was the only person the old Puritan would even hear of as a successor) and thereafter held a prominent position in the metropolis to the end of his life.

A presbyterian, he was infinitely more peace-loving than many of his fellows; perhaps the most unwise thing he ever did was to play a large part in the restoration of Charles II. This did not save him from becoming a frequent sufferer for his Nonconformity, though his generous spirit always held the respect of many who opposed his beloved Puritanism.

His great love and work was preaching, and though he preached three or four times a week for many years to large and discerning congregations, yet William Bates, that most classic and cultured of the later Puritan preachers says, he 'never heard him preach a mean sermon'. This was the result of much labour as well as natural gifts and true devotion on Manton's part. He was 'tireless' in both preaching and the preparation of his sermons. Often, he would rise up from bed in the dead of night eager to pen some new idea for the sermon in hand, and would write at length. His sermons fill twenty out of the twenty-two volumes of his works in their nineteenth century edition, and they range from his famous series of one hundred and ninety sermons on Psalm 119 to single sermons on various occasions. His famous contemporary, Archbishop Ussher, used to say that Manton was one of the 'best preachers in England' and Stephen Charnock thought him 'the best collector of sense of the age'—a reference to the well-researched content of Manton's productions.

Keeping the Gospel Pure

Bill Payne

THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS IS THE ONLY EPISTLE WHERE PAUL HAS nothing to say by way of commendation and appreciation of those to whom he is writing. He writes with a burdened soul, with great agitation of spirit and, after the initial opening, plunges straight into a remonstration with the Galatians because of their apparent defection from the gospel.

(1) *Paul's concern for the gospel*

I want to note first as we consider this section (chapter 1, verses 6-10) Paul's concern for the gospel. His words in verses 6 and 7 indicate that *there is only one gospel.* He had preached to them that gospel just a few years previously, and any teaching which deviated from what he had given them, whilst it may have appeared to be the gospel or may have seemed to be closely related to the gospel, was not the gospel at all. The commentator John Brown said:

> The leading principles of Christ's gospel are two—that men are restored to the divine favour ENTIRELY on account of the doings and sufferings of Jesus Christ; and that men are interested in these sufferings and doings ENTIRELY by believing.

Any message which does not agree with these basic principles must be rejected as being something other than the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Paul makes an interesting use of two words in verses 6 and 7 which is not brought out in our English version. The word translated "another" at the end of verse 6 is a different Greek word from that translated "another" in the beginning of verse 7. The word in verse 6 means another in the sense of a different kind. He says, "You have embraced another gospel; a different kind of gospel from the one I preached to you". The word in verse 7 means another numerically. In other words, "Here is the gospel I preached, and now another gospel is coming alongside of it". Paul is saying this is actually impossible; this other message which you are calling the gospel is not the gospel at all, for there is only one gospel.

In the light of what we know of the teaching of the Judaizers, we would have to say that *to add to the gospel is to pervert the gospel to the extent that it is destroyed.* These Judaizers were not trying to replace Christ with someone else. They were saying, "We accept Jesus, Jesus is fine, we think as much of Jesus as Paul does; we simply want to add something necessary which is missing. We are not telling you that you must not have faith in Christ, nevertheless you must know that as well as faith you

must do certain other things in order to be saved." That makes it very subtle and dangerous. This kind of approach has always been at heart the essence of the heresy of Romanism. You may talk about Jesus and his death on the cross, and having faith in him, and the Romanist says, "Wonderful! But now you must add to that the whole sacramental scheme, for grace is received by doing all the things which the church tells you to do." All the teaching of canon law and tradition is added, so that while Jesus and faith in him is not removed, the result is a system of salvation by works. The gospel has been perverted, and indeed destroyed. Some modern cults have the same problem.

Paul's concern about these additions to the gospel stemmed from two principles. Firstly, if adding to the gospel perverts and destroys the gospel, then *to add to the gospel is to endanger the souls of men.* Paul says, in chapter 4, verse 11, "I am afraid for you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain". There was a real danger in these people turning out to be reprobates. What people believe is indeed vital. To keep the gospel pure, to keep apostolic doctrine free from the errors that men would mix with it is an essential task. That is why God's people, and especially God's servants, are exhorted to "earnestly contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). We live today in a climate where it is considered unloving to engage in controversy in religious things and to oppose and criticise movements which are in error. Such an attitude is both unfair and misleading, for it may well be the most loving thing possible to expose and oppose that which perverts the truth, for the everlasting welfare of souls is concerned with a pure gospel. Is it unloving for the shepherd to ward off the wolf that is trying to get into the sheepfold? No more is it unloving for a servant of God to oppose religious movements which would feed people a perverted gospel and bring their souls into eternal damnation.

Secondly, to add to the gospel is *to detract from the glory of Christ.* This would move Paul to concern, for he loved his Lord and longed to see him exalted. Imagine someone displaying a beautiful Rembrandt, breathtaking in its magnificence, and my saying, "That's nice, but I think it ought to have some green here, and some blue there, and how about a good blob of white over here?" producing brush and paints and proceeding with my alterations. You would shout out, "Man, you are ruining a masterpiece; you are defacing a work of art!" The glory of the painting would be sadly diminished when I had finished with it! Thus it is when men add to the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. That salvation wrought out by him when he gave himself for our sins is a masterpiece. It is perfect. Justification on the grounds of the work of Christ imputed to the sinner and received by faith alone is God's masterpiece. For men to try to add to that and say "Yes, that is nice, but you must also submit to our rites and ceremonies", is a detraction from the glory of Christ.

(2) *Paul's attitude towards the perverters of the gospel*

This comes through explosively in verses 8 and 9: "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." We might express it briefly by saying it is *an attitude of total denunciation.* Paul pronounces a curse on the promulgators of the false gospel.

This is instructive to us for it shows that a difference is very clearly made between outright perverters of the gospel, such as Paul has in view here, and misled, faulty brothers, who though in error are nevertheless brothers in Christ. In Galatians, chapter two, we see Paul's confrontation with Peter. He does criticise Peter and oppose what he was doing, but he does not pronounce a curse on him. His attitude towards Peter was very different to his attitude towards the perverters of the gospel. Upon such perverters he pronounces an outright denunciation. It may be necessary for a Christian to oppose an evangelical brother who is doing a disservice to the cause of truth, but one's attitude towards him must be very different to one's attitude toward some modernist or cultist who is radically perverting the gospel and endangering souls.

If men preach that which undermines Christ's work those men are to be totally denounced. For anyone to do anything or say anything which would give people the impression that such men were harmless or acceptable is clearly contrary to the will of God in the light of Paul's words here. This is why, in my opinion, evangelical participation in ecumenical evangelism, and the whole ecumenical movement generally, where there is a link with those who clearly deny basic gospel principles, is terribly wrong and utterly tragic. "Let such be accursed!" is the attitude of the inspired apostle.

Here, also, we have *thoughtful denunciation.* What Paul says in verse 8 he repeats in verse 9: "as we said before, so say I now again. . . ." It is as though he imagines them saying, "Why, Paul has gone overboard here! He is so upset by the situation here in Galatia that he is beside himself; he doesn't know what he is saying. That outburst is just a shocking release of pent-up emotion." Paul says, "Just in case you think that way, let me say it to you again!" This is not something said in haste, to be regretted later; it was a thoughtful and calm apostolic pronunciation.

Furthermore, it is *an impartial denunciation,* for Paul clearly intends that no-one should be excluded from this curse if they are perverters of the truth. He says, "Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you . . . let him be accursed". Sometimes the devil tries to deceive men by over-awing them; he will try to pervert the gospel by means of someone with a reputation among men. Perhaps someone

loaded with scholarship, someone whom the world highly esteems, is the perverter of truth. Very flattering things may have been written about him; he is considered a very important man, and if some humble child of God protests about what is being taught, the response is, "Who are you to question? Look at the credentials of this man; he is learned, and highly regarded by society." But Paul says it does not matter if it is an angel from heaven; if he preaches another gospel let him be accursed. I personally think that Paul was using this kind of language to make the deepest possible impression. I do not think that he envisaged an angel preaching, but it is interesting to observe that we have had men preaching a false gospel and appealing to the fact that an angel appeared to them and taught them the message! They say, "We had a supernatural visitor: therefore our message must be true". Whether they did have a supernatural visitor or not is open to question, but the fact remains that even if an angel from heaven did come to them, if he taught them a gospel contrary to the gospel of the Scriptures he is to be accursed.

It is hard to imagine stronger language than that which Paul uses here; it makes it clear that he considered this matter of the purity of the gospel to be truly a vital matter. Those who perverted the gospel were not to be considered ministers of Christ; they were not to be treated as though they were harmless eccentrics, they were to be denounced and opposed, for the very curse of God is upon them.

(3) *Paul's underlying principle of operation*

This is given to us in verse 10: "For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I yet pleased men I should not be the servant of Christ." The word "persuade" is translated in other places "conciliate" or "court favour". It would appear that one of the accusations brought against Paul was that he was simply out to further his own ends. We have an expression—"to feather your own nest". Paul is saying to the Galatians, "Preachers who are out to feather their own nests don't make statements like the one I have just made to you!" I am afraid that religious circles have their share of what I call "politicians". They are men who are concerned to be well thought of; they want to get to the top of their particular group; they are careful to do or say nothing that will upset anyone and they are always excessively sweet, weighing up every statement and move to be sure that it will be the kind to make the exact impression they desire. Paul was the very opposite. He said, "If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ". This expression may indicate that there was a time when he did seek to please men; when he was jealous for his reputation and his own advancement. But that is no longer true. The operating principle within this man now was to please his Lord. And if we are going to please God we may be sure that we are not going to please all men. Some hard truth will have to be declared;

(*continued on page* 17)

Jim van Zyl continues his commentary on pop music. The final contribution in the series yet to be published is on the controversial issue of Christian pop music.

Modern Man and His Music

IN THIS SECOND PART OF MY EXAMINATION OF POPULAR MUSIC, I WANT TO suggest some of the main characteristics of pop music. These features will have particular relevance to Christians though it would be a great help if all who listened to pop music were aware of them.

Gut Reaction

Nick Cohn says of the Rolling Stones: 'All that counted was sound. . . . All din and mad atmosphere. Really, it was nothing but beat, smashed and crunched and hammered home like some amazing stampede. The words were lost and the song was lost. You were only left with chaos . . . anarchy. You drowned in noise.'

Hit Parader magazine, talking of David Bowie, says almost the same thing: 'He assaults the senses from every angle . . . unsophisticated, almost primitive at times, it is a distinctly harsh sound.'

In other words, this type of music produces in the listener a non-intellectual, existential experience. Release is sought through this experience by those who feel the need for increasing thrills in an increasingly boring round of life. Thus Peter Townsend, in an old *Melody Maker* wrote: 'Music certainly has a unity, a oneness about its spirit. . . . Get carried away, turn off your mind and float downstream, get on the giant albatross and fly through the crack in the cloud to the place where happiness reigns and music plays ever so loudly. Soak in the sound, don't worry about the bass player's groovy braces . . . just listen to that music making love and make love with it. . . .' What is significant here is the fact that you must turn off your mind, soak up the noise and float into an existential heaven of happiness. It seems to me that this is one of the cardinal dangers in much pop music. Man is made into a punch-bag to be bombarded with sound, thus being stripped of his God-given intellect and capacity for objective, rational (not rationalistic) appraisal and observation.

The basic approach of such music is certainly hostile to the Christian message, which emphasises that in Christ the sinner is renewed, not only in his will and affections, but also in his mind. Paul stresses many times in his epistles the control of the mind. We could take the Lord Jesus Christ, the perfect man, as an example of perfect self-control. We should never 'turn off' simply to experience an encounter on cloud nine!

Not all pop music, of course, relies so heavily on sound, but undoubtedly large portions do.

No absolute truth

This follows from the first characteristic. For every one hundred people who turn off and immerse themselves in this stream of music, there will be one hundred different experiences subsequently related, all of which appear to be equally valid. There is but a short step between the experience itself and the elevation of it into a truth, for there is nothing we cling to more fiercely than our religious and psychological feelings—even in the face of objective facts. Much of the charismatic movement in evangelicalism is an example of how the experience of some individuals is turned into a universal dogma called the baptism of the spirit.

With one hundred different 'truths', all equally strongly held, absolute truth in the Christian sense ceases to exist. In the pop culture a certain belief is no longer either valid or invalid—it can be both, depending on what the person experiences. There is no longer truth and error, the genuine article and the false. Each man must do his own thing! All experiences are equally valid; relativism alone has become the absolute. The Beatles exemplify this attitude. They said: 'What he (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi) says about life and the universe is the same message that Jesus, Buddha and Krishna . . . were putting over.' One single statement of Christ, that he was the only way of approach to God the Father, lays this pitiful fallacy low, but one doubts whether the Beatles ever seriously read what Jesus said. Paul McCartney confirms the relativism: 'But the truth is that it's neither good nor lousy; just down the middle; a state of being that doesn't have black or white, good or bad.'

This neutrality is seen in the moral approach of many pop singers. As Frank Zappa expresses it: 'Freaking out is a process whereby an individual casts off outmoded and restricted standards. . . .' Zappa and his group, Mothers of Invention, epitomised such an approach. They were gross, filthy, obscene, seeking to smash every law of God which they could. Their first album is called, appropriately enough, *The Return of the Son of Monster Magnet.*

A feeling of despair stems directly from this unconscious or conscious rejection of God's absolutes. If there is nothing but relativism then of necessity one ends up with nothing but uncertainties and despair. There are many examples of this from almost every department of pop.

One of the most moving songs I know is *Old Friends* (Simon and Garfunkel). It is a simple, exceptionally sensitive ballad with a haunting melody. However, with all its genuine beauty, it is quite hopeless in its despair:

Old friends
Winter companions
The old men
Lost in overcoats
Waiting for the sunset

Can you imagine us
Years from today
Sharing a parkbench quietly?
How terribly strange
To be seventy

Old Friends
Memory brushes the same years
Silently sharing the same fears . . .

There is great sensitivity here. Perhaps this comes from the Jewish concern with the aged, but we cannot overlook it.

The same haunting beauty, yet ceaseless despair, runs through much of Bob Dylan, was seen in some of the Beatles songs and in groups like the Moody Blues. Joan Baez sang of it in *Annabel Lee* and James Taylor in *Sunny Skies.* Pink Floyd put it this way in the song *Eclipse:*

and you run and you run to catch up with the sun
but it's sinking
and racking around to come up behind you again
The sun is the same in the relative way but you're
older
Shorter of breath and one day closer to death.

This melancholy, hopeless feeling of despair and nostalgia runs through probably hundreds of pop songs.

Mysticism, Drugs and Sex

Western society has seen a renewed interest in Eastern religion and the occult. This emerges in such songs as *My Sweet Lord, In Search of Lost Chord, Third Eye* and *Black Sabbath.* David Bowie dropped out of high school to study Tibetan Buddhism and the saxophone, according to *Hit Parader.*

The Beatles were perhaps largely responsible for the widespread interest in Eastern religion, through their liaison with the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. Bob Dylan was reputed, for a time to be involved in Dharma, which is a path of service in Hinduism to raise one's status.

Over-emphasis on drugs and parading of illicit sex comes from a wrong understanding of freedom, translated into the realm of love and mind expanding experiences.

I do not want to devote much time to drugs, for much of this is well known, except to mention such songs as *With a little help from my friends* (Beatles) and *Mr. Tambourine Man* (Dylan). One finds a similarity between songs of this kind. Phrases and expressions such as 'smoke ring of my mind', 'trip' and 'newspaper taxi' are to be noted.

References to sex are present to an astonishing degree in pop lyrics and especially in the live shows, which in extreme cases have become nothing more or less than an orgiastic experience for many of the teenagers present. There is usually no clear line drawn between legitimate and illegitimate

sex. Joan Baez can sing very beautiful folk songs, but a song like *Plaisir d'Amour* can give little *plaisir* to a Christian! Bob Dylan, in his LP *Nashville Skyline* concentrates, in half of his songs, on sexually sordid themes. Simon and Garfunkel's beautiful song, *Cecilia*, is marred by the play on casual sexual relations.

Bob Larsen, in his book, *The Day Music Died* (Creation House 1972) points out that explicit and implicit sexual displays by artists who appear live before audiences are now commonplace. Whether it is Jimi Hendrix using his guitar as a sexual partner, or Jim Morrison arrested in New Haven for 'giving an indecent or immoral exhibition', or Grand Funk with their erotic beat (*Planet*, October 1971—a magazine dedicated to them), the sad and sordid trait is the same. In the first part of this article, on the history of pop music, I dealt with blues music, and it is important to remember that blues is the origin of most of this sexual expressionism.

All Christian parents need to realise that their children are being constantly exposed to this atmosphere.

Destructiveness

Both among pop artists and listeners the pace, noise, beat, adulation, and nervous tension, plus the encouragement to indulge in sex, drugs and drink, have, in many tragic instances, resulted in a high casualty list. Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix, Hank Williams senior, Brian Epstein, Brian Jones and Jim Morrison are all, one way or another, victims.

It is equally significant that many jazzmen from the 1940s onwards were casualties through drugs. Charles Fox, in *Jazz Scene*, mentions Charlie Parker and Fats Navarro, and admits that too many died this way, either directly or indirectly.

I do not think we should underestimate the psychological and spiritual hammering that many teenagers go through who become deeply immersed in pop. In the *South African Medical Journal* (June 1970), the effects of hypnotic and highly amplified music were examined. It was pointed out that '. . . the possibility of damage to the hearing is no longer theoretical.' The article goes on to say: 'It is obvious that the music, played in a manner to arouse the strongest possible emotional reaction among young audiences, has the same effect as that reached by certain pharmacological preparations—and if this is the case we can no longer say that modern music may be accepted as innocent.' We should take note of warnings such as this.

The use of the heavy beat is a centuries old method of lowering the resistance of the mind to suggestions made to it. William Sargent in *Battle for the Mind* (Pan p. 92ff.) puts it like this: 'It should be more widely known that electrical recordings of the human brain show that it is particularly sensitive to rhythmic stimulation by percussion and bright

light among other things and certain rates of rhythm can build up recordable abnormalities of brain function and explosive states of tension sufficient to produce convulsive fits of predisposed subjects.' The application to pop music is obvious.

More serious still, we should not forget that the use of the drum and the beat is often a deliberate attempt to lower resistance in order to allow destructive influence to affect a person. This is a widespread phenomenon among African religions, especially Voodoo in Haiti. Maya Deren in her book *The Divine Horsemen* describes how she went to study and film Haitian dancing and how she, against her own will, became so absorbed into the rhythm that she was forced to submit and ended up being possessed herself. She points out that the drummer occupies the central position and his drum beat integrates the entire assembly into a single body. It is especially his task to move the mass forward, stage by stage, until every person is possessed by one of the loa, the Haitian gods. 'It is upon these pulsations that, for the most part, the loa are brought forward; and as they can be led in on water, or on rum, or on the fire of burning rum, so, innerly, it is as if they were brought in on the stream of the blood, pulsed not by the individual personal heart, but by some, older, deeper, cosmic heart—the drums.' (*The Divine Horsemen*, Chelsea House Publications, p. 238.)

It would be foolish in the extreme to suggest that every piece of music with a beat carries the risk of inducing demonic possession. Nevertheless, when you see the horrific stage antics of some of the most extreme groups, you cannot but wonder how much demonic influence is present. I believe we can say that those who become obsessed with certain forms of pop run the risk, not only of being psychologically brain-washed but also opening themselves up to the suggestions and temptations of the evil one. Janis Joplin sums up, describing the destruction of her own personality: 'I couldn't believe it, all that rhythm and power. I got stoned just feeling it, like it was the best dope in the world. It was so sensual' (Larsen *The Day Music Died*, p. 45).

Conclusion

To some what I have said may act as a warning and being alerted to the grave dangers involved may cause them to check their home situations far more carefully. Others who may be scrupulous anyway may say that pop music is harmless and attractive.

Admitting, then, that some pop music is attractive; some beautiful; some innocent; some full of idealism and righteous protest; that not all the performers are sordid and obscene, we can still do no less than in general define a great deal of it in terms of 1 John 2:16: 'For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, is not of the Father but is of the world.'

In leading up to his subject the editor first comments on Calvinism today and the way in which it is taught. One of the conclusions made is that the practice of decisionism can approach to witchcraft. Would our readers agree with that?

Why Preach to the Dead in Sin?

JUDGING BY THE PROGRAMMES OF FREE GRACE CONFERENCES IN AMERICA the most popular way of teaching sovereign grace is by the exposition of the five points of Calvinism. By now everyone should know the acrostic, TULIP, total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace and perseverance of the saints. These five points emerged not from Calvin (although he held them), but from the Synod of Dort of 1620. The five points were elaborated to combat Arminianism which way of thought is contrary to the five points. It is good that TULIP be taught and understood, but there is always a danger that the corresponding application be omitted. The doctrines of grace are everywhere taught in Scripture but always within the context of application.

The five links in the golden chain of Romans eight (the Father's electing love in foreknowledge, his predestination, calling, justification and glorification) in my view form a better basis for preaching the doctrines of grace than TULIP. Observe the application with which Romans eight concludes. The doctrine represented by each letter of TULIP could end with a stirring application but what if the preacher fails to include such?

There are so many passages of Scripture ideal for expounding sovereign grace that one hardly knows where to begin, not only in the epistles—Romans 3 and 9-11, 1 Corinthians 1, 2, 2 Corinthians 5, Ephesians 2, Hebrews 10, 1 Peter 1, spring to mind, but also chapters from the Gospels such as John 6 and 10, not to mention many statements such as 2 Timothy 1:9, 2 Thessalonians 2:13 and Revelation 17:14.

What are the graces that Calvinism ought to produce? The five graces of Colossians 3:12,13 could be popularised as the five graces of Calvinism, graces which are as vital to the life of the Reformed cause as the doctrines themselves: compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. All these are bonded together with love just as the five points of TULIP all have reference to the sovereignty of God. I stick to the A.V. but occasionally another version brings out the sense of the original better. With Colossians 3:12-14 the *New International Version* expresses verse 14 beautifully, 'and over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity'. And how does Calvinism behave? My answer to that is that the more a man understands and loves sovereign grace in his heart the more he will hold the truth in love. Not one at the expense

of the other, but he will have a profound compassion and love while holding to truth without compromise.

Lying at the very heart of the doctrines of grace is the truth of regeneration. If the nature of regeneration is rightly understood the doctrines of grace will readily fall into place.

Regeneration is the action of God. As the Father effectually calls the sinner he creates him anew in Christ Jesus. Regeneration, or a change of heart, is a gift procured by Christ for those whom the Father has given him. God has exalted Jesus with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins (Acts 5:31). Regeneration is applied to God's elect by the working of the Holy Spirit as he quickens them into union with Christ. It is correct to say that the Father is the author of regeneration and that the Holy Spirit is the agent in regeneration (Eph. 2:10, John 3:8). The instrument used in bringing about the new birth is the preaching of the Word (Jas. 1:18, 1 Pet. 1:23), faith and repentance following regeneration. Spiritual life is the consequence of spiritual quickening. The baby cries because it is born and is not born because it cries.

The notion which prevails most widely is that the sinner's response precedes regeneration or that it is the exercise of the sinner's so-called free-will that results in regeneration. The Scriptures however show that while the sinner is much alive in the use of his faculties he is spiritually dead towards God (Eph. 2:1). Nor is regeneration the result of a co-operation of the sinner's will with God's will. The sinner is dead toward God and the initiative of the omnipotent one is seen, not in a kindling of the sinner's will so that he can then decide aright in order to attain regeneration, but rather a total operation in which the whole disposition is regenerated and the whole man renewed in a mighty creative act which we call the new birth.

This being so the charge is made that it is futile to proclaim the necessity of the new birth to sinners since they are dead and destitute of any ability to understand or respond. Orthodox believers can easily slide into false conclusions concerning the inability of sinners and inadvertently come to deny responsibility. The nickname for those who argue with the plain commands of God to sinners to repent and believe (on the grounds that such commands imply human ability) is 'hyper-Calvinist'. Such believers are *hyper* because they go further than Calvin and the Reformers and Puritans who did not deem it necessary to backtrot and 'hum and ha' in qualifying plain exhortations to dead sinners to believe and repent. It is a sure sign of 'hyperism' in a preacher if he is ill at ease with the free offers and invitations of the Gospels and unable to proclaim them with complete liberty and ease.

The very essence of 'hyperism' is when people put the secret counsel of God before his revealed truth. Incipiently they come to believe that God

deals only wrathfully with the non-elect (vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, Rom. 9:22, is applied carte blanche) and only lovingly with the elect. They cannot conceive that God should sincerely desire the salvation of reprobate people. That he should remonstrate and reason with such people is an attempt to bring them to repentance they find hard to understand. That Christ should weep over the reprobates of Jerusalem is exceedingly strange to 'hypers' because they cannot reconcile God's decree to destroy Jerusalem with the Redeemer's tears.

That God should have genuine dealings with reprobates like Pharaoh, Balaam, Esau, Saul and Judas they also find difficult to understand, not comprehending that unlike the race of fallen angels for whom there is no gospel, the whole human race in its entirety has been put on probation. Irrespective of his determination to save a multitude whose names are known only to himself (and therefore secret) the Almighty God deals with all the human race, elect and non-elect, on the basis of responsibility. This he does irrespective of what he has secretly decreed. He deals with men as responsible men from first to last, from the time of the fall and in spite of its devastating effects. This fact renders consistent the truth that he will judge all his creatures on the grounds of works or their responsibility (see Matt. 25:14-46, Rom. 2:1-16, Rev. 20:13). That faith that does not produce responsible good works will be seen in the judgment day to be futile and despicable. Elect and non-elect will be judged according to works (2 Cor. 5:10, Jas 2:14-26).

Let us observe some reasons why we preach the necessity of regeneration to all men even though they are dead in sin. Let us see why we deem that to be essential and not vain or stupid.

1. **Preaching regeneration tells the truth about depravity and responsibility** Regeneration, the making of a new heart and a new spirit, is man's responsibility. God commands man to regenerate himself. *Make you a new heart and a new spirit* (Ezek. 18:31). Man ruined his own heart. Now it is his responsibility to repair it. He may not plead his inability. That is wickedness, just as it is wickedness to side with a sinner in his excuse of inability. Anything which detracts from the sinner's solemn responsibility is to be shunned. The moral law utterly condemns the sinner's actions, his thoughts, his motives, his life! He must make himself a new heart or be damned in hell fire for ever! But how to get a new heart? His feet are alive! His ears can hear! His eyes can see and read! Let him attend the means of grace. Let him follow the instructions of Isaiah chapter 55, verses 6 and 7. Let him seek, and call, and forsake his wicked, ungodly ways. His spiritual responsibility to the whole of God's law is entire. Preaching the necessity of regeneration serves to instruct him both in his need and responsibility. The alarming discovery of his total inability tends to the discovery of God's complete ability. Blessed discovery!

2. Preaching regeneration is in itself a means in God's hands

Preaching the necessity of regeneration to dead sinners is essential not only because it exposes their need and state to them, but such preaching in itself is the means of regeneration. The power of God runs with his Word as we see illustrated in the case of the raising up of a whole army from dead bones (Ezek. 37). This principle is seen too in Ephesians 5:14: 'Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light!' What is the use of preaching to the sleeping dead? Answer: it is God's means of awakening the sleeping dead. The faculties of people; mind, affections, conscience and will, are very much alive, alive to sin but dead to God. God awakens when he speeds his Word along these natural faculties as fire on a dry heath. 'Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God' (Rom. 10:7).

3. Preaching regeneration is in itself part of teaching which precedes the new birth

The importance of preaching regeneration can be seen in the fact that a preparatory work precedes that great act of God. Before God breathed life into Adam he made his body. That is a valid illustration of the new birth inasmuch as it is the Lord's way to lay a body of truth in a man's soul before he creates him in Christ. Before he believes on Christ he knows the facts of Christ. We have been commanded to teach all unregenerate nations and as we teach and preach the Gospel to them we expect results. No preaching. No results. He that sows liberally will reap liberally. We are the happy slaves of Christ inasmuch as we are bound to his teaching and bound to him in dependence. Both his Word and his Spirit are essential. Thus prayer and preaching are the main means of evangelism.

A common mistake is to think that the Holy Spirit does not work in unregenerate man. The degree to which he can and does work in them is seen not only in some of the reprobate cases already mentioned, but also in Hebrews chapter six verse four which declares of those who fall away that they were 'made partakers of the Holy Ghost'. There is a work of the Holy Spirit which is extensive but which falls short of regeneration. Says John Owen in his penetrating way:

> There are certain *internal spiritual effects* wrought in and upon the souls of men, whereof the word preached is the immediate instrumental cause, which ordinarily do precede the work of regeneration, or real conversion unto God. And they are reducible unto three heads: (1) *Illumination;* (2) *Conviction;* (3) *Reformation.* The first of these respects the mind only; the second, the mind, conscience, and affections; and the third, the life and conversation (*Works.* vol. 3, p. 231).

Conclusions

In conclusion let the observation be made that it is our responsibility to preach the necessity of the new birth to the unregenerate. For numbers

of unconverted people to hear preaching of this kind today is exceedingly rare. Is that not a terrible tragedy? A feature of the great revivals of past centuries was that the common people came under biblical preaching which God used to their salvation. We read in Hosea 11:4, 'I drew them with words of a man, with the bonds of love.' Love, patience and perseverance are means which God uses to bring people under the Gospel. It is a good sign when like our Saviour our hearts are filled with compassion for the unregenerate multitudes and when this love mobilises us mightily in the work of evangelism.

One of the curses of this century is decisionism, the widely held idea that people regenerate themselves by an act of visible response, by coming to the front in response to an appeal or by raising a hand. Such practice *can approach* to witchcraft, the worst kind of deception, calculated to give assurance where none is warranted, a craft more deadly than witchcraft inasmuch as multitudes are deluded with false assurances of heaven when in fact they are still by nature the children of hell.

One of the first steps to spiritual awakening is the discovery that while the new birth is our responsibility it lies in God's power alone. We must repent. We cannot repent. We are shut up to God. We are constrained to call upon him. Such statements as, 'whosover shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved' (Rom. 10:13) encourage us to pray and seek fervently.

To us belongs the preaching: to the Spirit the convicting of the world of sin, righteousness and judgement: to the Father, drawing and regeneration: to Christ, the reward of his travail. Let us do with all our might that which belongs to us and pray to God that he will do his own work to his glory and our encouragement.

The Westminster Conference for Theological and Historical Study with special reference to the Puritans to be held at Westminster Chapel, Buckingham Gate, London, S.W.1, Tuesday and Wednesday, 16th and 17th December, 1975. Chairman: Dr. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones. Subject: The Christian and the State in Revolutionary Times. Speakers: Harrison, Kreider, Prof. Collins, Peter Lewis, Straub and Lloyd-Jones. It is necessary to write to David Bugden, 75 High Street, Huntingdon, Cambs., PE17 2TA, for details and bookings.

Preaching and pastoral care

PURITANISM IS A TERM WHICH BELONGS TO THE PAST. Can it become a vital possession of the present? Not a few rejoice in a revival of Puritanism Today and the application of old truths to the contemporary scene. In this the contribution of the seventeenth-century Puritans is considerable, for they were strongest where many today are weak. They believed in concentrating upon priorities: the Church, preaching and the nurture of spiritual life. In modern times there is little real enthusiasm for expository preaching, while the nurture and care of souls often receives scant treatment. For those who are concerned to see a return to biblical priorities this book is likely to prove an absolute tonic.

Having described to us the character and course of English Puritanism, the author introduces us to the lives of some of the Puritan preachers. This acquaintance being made, he steps back and acts as a guide (a brilliant one, according to Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones) for thereafter the Puritans speak to us themselves. Firstly they tell us of their view of preaching and secondly we see the care they took to ensure that, by good hearing, their expositions were absorbed to profit.

In the third place, they give us an example of their pastoral genius. They deal searchingly, practically and thoroughly with the subject of spiritual depressions: their causes and their cures. Here they excel. Not with slick and shallow answers, but with marvellous discernment and wisdom they diagnose and administer healing to souls.

were priorities with the Puritans

THE GENIUS OF PURITANISM

by Peter Lewis

Foreword by Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

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